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RELEASED IN PART  
B6, B1, 1.4(D)

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ACTION ARA-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-08	ACDE-00	AID-00	ACQ-01	CEA-01	CTME-00
	DODE-00	DOEE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EXIM-01	E-00
	FRB-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	ITC-01	LAB-01
	L-01	ADS-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00
	PM-00	PRS-00	P-00	CIO-00	SP-00	SSO-00	STR-00
	TRSE-00	T-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-04	G-00	FDIC-01
	SAS-00	/023W					

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R 031128Z MAR 98  
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9910  
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
AMEMBASSY QUITO  
AMEMBASSY LIMA  
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN  
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN  
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
USCINCSO MIAMI FL  
CIA WASHDC  
DIA WASHDC  
USIA WASHDC 1454  
USDOC WASHDC 2663

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 CARACAS 000599

E.O. 12958: DECL: 3/2/08

TAGS: PREL, PGOV, ECON, EFIN, VE

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SUBJECT: WHATEVER IT TAKES TO WIN: A VENEZUELAN CAMPAIGN NOTEBOOKCLASSIFIED BY  
1.5(D).

REASON:

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WELCOME TO OUR CAMPAIGN NOTEBOOK  
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1. (C) THIS IS THE FIRST IN A BIWEEKLY SERIES OF REPORTS ON  
VENEZUELA'S 1998 ELECTIONS. THE DECEMBER BALLOTING, IN WHICH ALL

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE n/a  
REVIEW AUTHORITY: OSCAR J OLSON CONFIDENTIAL  
CLASSIFICATION: CONFIDENTIAL REASON: 1.4(D)  
DECLASSIFY AFTER: 2 MAR 2023  
DATE/CASE ID: 15 JUL 2009 200503654

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6,000 ELECTED OFFICES IN THE COUNTRY ARE UP FOR GRABS, WILL BE A PRINCIPAL FOCUS OF MUCH OF OUR REGULAR POLITICAL REPORTING. THAT REPORTING WILL ADDRESS IN TRADITIONAL FASHION OUR INTERESTS AND CONCERNS IN THIS ELECTION. THE PURPOSE OF THIS CAMPAIGN NOTEBOOK, HOWEVER, IS DIFFERENT. WE HOPE TO BRING TO YOU THE "OFF CAMERA" POLITICS OF THIS ELECTION YEAR. AT ONE LEVEL, THIS MEANS SHARING WITH YOU THE ODDS AND ENDS WHICH DID NOT MAKE IT INTO OUR REGULAR REPORTING. AT A MORE IMPORTANT AND ENJOYABLE LEVEL, WE HOPE TO BRING YOU THE SMELL, FLAVOR, AND TOUCH OF VENEZUELAN POLITICS.

2. (C) EACH ISSUE OF THE NOTEBOOK WILL START WITH THE "CAMPAIGN NEWS TICKER," AND WILL FEATURE SHORT ELECTION NEWS ITEMS. THE NEXT SECTION WILL HIGHLIGHT VIGNETTES ABOUT THE CANDIDATES, THEIR CAMPAIGNS, AND THE MEDIA. THE FINAL SECTION WILL PROFILE EITHER A "HIGH-FLYER" OR A "BOTTOM-FEEDER," AND WILL FOCUS OF THE HANDLERS, ADVISORS, AND MINOR POLITICIANS WHO WORK IN AND AROUND THE CAMPAIGNS.

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CAMPAIGN NEWS TICKER  
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-- (U) NATIONAL ELECTORAL COUNCIL (CNE) SELECTED; PRESIDENT DROPS DEAD. AFTER MUCH WHEELING AND DEALING, DURING WHICH SUPREME COURT SEATS WERE OFFERED FOR CNE SEATS, THE PARTIES REACHED AGREEMENT ON THE COMPOSITION OF THIS COUNCIL. NO SOONER HAD JUSTO PASTOR FERNANDEZ BEEN NAMED PRESIDENT OF THIS COUNCIL, THAN HE DIED OF A HEART ATTACK WHILE HIKING THE AVILA (A NATIONAL PARK AND MOUNTAIN RANGE WHICH IS THE NORTHERN LIMIT OF CARACAS) OVER CARNIVAL WEEKEND. THE NEW PRESIDENT WILL BE RAFAEL PARRA PEREZ, AN AGING ACADEMICA WHOSE PRINCIPAL STRONG POINT IS THAT HE HAS NO POLITICAL PROFILE.

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(C) (INSIDERS TOLD US THAT PARTY WRANGLING HAD PARALYZED THE CNE SELECTION PROCESS, AND THAT SEVERAL PARTIES--THE RADICAL CAUSE PARTY (LCR) AND HOMELAND FOR ALL (PPT)--REFUSED TO ACCEPT FERNANDEZ, A RETIRED ADMIRAL, AS HEAD OF THE CNE. THE IMPASSE WAS RESOLVED ONLY WHEN PRESIDENT CALDERA, AD SECRETARY GENERAL LUIS

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ALFARO UCERO, AND COPEI PRESIDENT LUIS HERRERA CAMPINS MET AND DECIDED ON A SLATE OF NAMES. THE PARTIES THEY REPRESENT--CONVERGENICA, AD, AND COPEI--HAD THE VOTES TO FORCE THROUGH THEIR SLATE. IN FACE OF THIS, OTHER PARTIES DECIDED TO GET IN LINE AND THE CNE SLATE WAS APPROVED. THE DISMAY AT FERNANDEZ'S DEMISE WAS EVIDENT IN THE WORDS OF ONE OF OUR CONTACTS, WHO TOLD US, "WE WENT THROUGH ALL THAT EFFORT, STRUGGLED TO WIN AGREEMENT ON JUSTO PASTOR, AND THEN HE DIES ON US.")

-- (U) CHAVEZ WANTS A CONSTITUTIONAL CONGRESS REFERENDUM ON THE DECEMBER BALLOT. RESPONDING TO CHARGES THAT HIS DESIRE TO DISSOLVE THE CONGRESS AND ESTABLISH A CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY TO REWRITE THE CONSTITUTION IS "ANTI-DEMOCRATIC," FORMER COUPSTER HUGO CHAVEZ SAYS, "LET THE PEOPLE DECIDE." HE NOTED, "IF THE PEOPLE SAY YES TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY, THERE IS NO NEED TO ELECT A CONGRESS; INSTEAD WE WOULD BE ABLE TO BEGIN THE NEW GOVERNMENT CALLING FOR ELECTIONS FOR THE CONSTITUYENTE." CHAVEZ KNOWS HIS SUGGESTION WILL NOT PROSPER. THE VENEZUELAN CONSTITUTION MAKES NO ALLOWANCE FOR REFERENDA--EITHER BINDING OR NON-BINDING--AND CONGRESS WOULD NOT AGREE TO ITS OWN DEMISE. NEVERTHELESS, CHAVEZ WANTS TO UNDERSCORE WHAT HAS BECOME HIS CENTRAL CAMPAIGN MESSAGE: HE REPRESENTS DRAMATIC AND SYSTEMIC CHANGE.

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	PM-00	PRS-00	P-00	CIO-00	SP-00	SSO-00	STR-00
	TRSE-00	T-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-04	G-00	FDIC-01

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R 031128Z MAR 98  
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9911  
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
AMEMBASSY QUITO  
AMEMBASSY LIMA  
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN  
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN  
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
USCINCSO MIAMI FL  
CIA WASHDC  
DIA WASHDC  
USIA WASHDC 1455  
USDOC WASHDC 2664

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 04 CARACAS 000599

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TAGS: PREL, PGOV, ECON, EFIN, VE

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SUBJECT: WHATEVER IT TAKES TO WIN: A VENEZUELAN CAMPAIGN NOTEBOOK

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-- (U) AD GOVERNORS CALL FOR "A CONSENSUS CANDIDATE." DURING A RECENT GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE MEETING IN CARACAS, THE AD GOVERNORS' CAUCUS PUBLICLY CALLED FOR THE PARTY TO CHOOSE ITS PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE "BY CONSENSUS," AND TO AVOID A PARTY PRIMARY ELECTION. THE GOVERNORS ARGUED THAT A PRIMARY WOULD "DIVIDE" THE PARTY AND WEAKEN ITS CANDIDATE IN THE GENERAL ELECTION. THE GOVERNOR'S POSITION IS IN MARKED CONTRAST TO THAT OF TWO PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFULS, SENATOR LEWIS PEREZ AND CARACAS MAYOR ANTONIO LEDESMA, WHO WANT A PRIMARY. PEREZ TOLD US RECENTLY THAT A PRIMARY IS NECESSARY TO REBUT CLAUDIO FERMIN'S CLAIM THAT HE LEFT THE PARTY BECAUSE PARTY BOSSES WOULD NOT LET PARTY MEMBERS CHOOSE AD'S CANDIDATE. PEREZ COMMENTED, "WE WANT A PRIMARY SO THAT THE PARTY

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CANDIDATE CAN TELL THE VOTERS THAT CLAUDIO LEFT THE PARTY BECAUSE HE KNEW HE COULD NOT WIN AN ELECTION."

-- (U) COPEI LEADERSHIP AND PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFUL EDUARDO FERNANDEZ CONTINUE TO FIGHT. COPEI SECRETARY GENERAL DONALD RAMIREZ TOLD THE PRESS RECENTLY, "THERE IS NO WAY EDUARDO FERNANDEZ WILL BE THE COPEI CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT." THIS CAME SHORTLY AFTER FERNANDEZ  
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DECLARED HIMSELF "THE NATURAL CANDIDATE" OF THE PARTY. BOTH WERE TOLD TO SHUT UP AND SIT DOWN BY SEVERAL LEADING COPEYANO POLITICIANS, WHO POINTED OUT THAT IT IS "THE PARTY FAITHFUL" WHO WILL CHOOSE COPEI'S CANDIDATE. RAMIREZ WASN'T PAYING ATTENTION, HOWEVER, AND HAS KEPT UP HIS DRUMBEAT FOR THE PARTY TO SUPPORT THE CANDIDACY OF IRENE SAEZ. RAMIREZ TOLD US RECENTLY, "FERNANDEZ IS A BURNT-OUT POLITICIAN WHO DOES NOT KNOW WHEN TO GIVE UP."

-- (C) CAP AND FERMIN BREAK UP, FOR THE MOMENT. EFFORTS BY KEY STRATEGISTS IN APERTURA, THE PARTY OF CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ (CAP), AND RENOVACION, THE PARTY OF CLAUDIO FERMIN, TO WORK OUT AN ELECTORAL ALLIANCE BROKE APART FOLLOWING A PUBLIC SPAT BETWEEN CAP AND FERMIN.

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VIGNETTES  
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CLAUDIO'S NAPKIN:  
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INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-08	ACDE-00	AID-00	ACQ-01	CRA-01	CTME-00
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	TRSE-00	T-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-04	G-00	FDIC-01
	SAS-00	/023W					

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R 031128Z MAR 98  
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9912  
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
AMEMBASSY QUITO  
AMEMBASSY LIMA  
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN  
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN  
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
USCINCSO MIAMI FL  
CIA WASHDC

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DIA WASHDC  
USIA WASHDC 1456  
USDOC WASHDC 2665

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DICK MORRIS IS IN TOWN:  
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5. (C) NOTED POLITICAL CONSULTANT DICK MORRIS IS WORKING FOR AD PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFUL LEWIS PEREZ. IN A RELATIONSHIP WHICH HAS LASTED NEARLY A YEAR, MORRIS HAS BEEN PROVIDING ADVICE AND POLLING DATA TO PEREZ. MOST OF MORRIS' WORK HAS BEEN DONE OUT OF NEW YORK, AND PEREZ RIGHT-HAND MAN AND AD DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS TIMOTEO ZAMBRANO HAS BEEN THE PRINCIPAL CONTACT POINT. (ZAMBRANO COMPLAINED RECENTLY THAT HE WAS TRAVELLING SO FREQUENTLY TO NEW YORK THAT IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS HAVE BECOME SUSPICIOUS AND ARE PULLING HIM OUT OF THE LINE AND SENDING HIM TO SECONDARY EACH TIME HE FLIES INTO JFK.)

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DRAWING A BEAD OF AMERICAN POLITICAL CONSULTANTS:

7. (U) COLUMNIST AND POLITICAL CONSULTANT QUILTERD AN OP-ED PIECE IN THE FEBRUARY 23 "EL UNIVERSAL" EXCORIATING THE ROLE OF U.S. POLITICAL CONSULTANTS IN VENEZUELA AND THE THIRD WORLD. ROWAN BEGINS HIS ARTICLE, "FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO THOUGHT THIS YEAR'S ELECTIONS WERE GOING TO BE DIFFERENT AND REFRESHING, THINK AGAIN. AMERICAN POLITICAL CONSULTANTS ARE ALREADY IN OUR COUNTRY TO DIRECT THIS YEAR'S ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN."

8. (U) POINTING A FINGER AT JOE NAPOLITAN, DAVID GARTH, BOB SQUIER, AND DICK MORRIS, ROWAN SAYS THESE CONSULTANTS ARE BATTLING FOR ACCESS TO THE "WORLD'S SECOND LARGEST MARKET--BEHIND THE U.S.--IN THE ELECTIONS BUSINESS." CLAIMING THAT NAPOLITAN AND GARTH HAVE CHARGED UP TO USD ONE MILLION PER YEAR FOR THEIR ADVICE TO AD AND COPEI BEGINNING IN 1973, HE ALLEGES THAT TIES BETWEEN THESE CONSULTANTS AND THE SECRET FINANCIERS OF PARTY POLITICS IS ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL SOURCES OF CORRUPTION IN VENEZUELA. HE ALLEGES THAT AMERICAN POLITICAL CONSULTANTS PLAYED KEY ROLES IN PROPPING UP THE MARCOS AND MOBUTU REGIMES, AND INTIMATES THAT A SIMILAR DARK FATE AWAITS VENEZUELA.

9. (U) HE CRITICIZES THESE CONSULTANTS FOR "NOT CARING ABOUT GOVERNMENT." HE NOTES THAT VENEZUELA'S BIG PROBLEM IS THAT THERE ARE "HUGE QUANTITIES OF DIRTY MONEY AND NO TRANSPARENT SYSTEM TO

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KEEP THIS MONEY AWAY" FROM INDEPENDENT POLITICAL CANDIDATES. HE SAID "THERE IS NO WAY TO INTEREST THE CONSULTANTS IN PUTTING AN END TO THE CORRUPTION OF WHICH THEY FORM PART."

10. (U) ROWAN CLOSES HIS ARTICLE BY WRITING, "I DEDICATE THESE ARTICLES TO YOU AND THE PEOPLE OF THE PHILIPPINES AND THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (ZAIRE). I BEG GOD THAT WE DO NOT HAVE TO RELIVE THEIR TRAGEDIES."

HIGH FLYERS AND BOTTOM-FEEDERS



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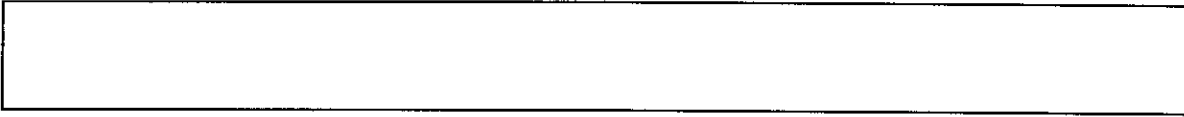
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